



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

October 28, 2004

For immediate release

- 1. Le Mars public hearing on CAFO rule proposal changes location**
- 2. DNR improves wastewater permitting process**

LOCATION CHANGE FOR LE MARS PUBLIC HEARING ON ANIMAL FEEDING RULES

DES MOINES – The location of the Le Mars public hearing on a proposed rule that would primarily affect larger or concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFO) has been changed.

The Le Mars public hearing will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Nov. 2 in the Upper Level Boardroom of the City Convention Center, 301 12th St SE in Le Mars.

This rule change will be of interest to livestock and poultry producers who have larger operations. Specifically, larger confinement feeding operations would be affected since they would be required to apply for national pollutant discharge elimination system (NPDES) permits for the first time in Iowa.

“These rule changes are being proposed to bring Iowa into compliance with federal regulations that changed in 2003,” said Gene Tinker, coordinator for DNR’s animal feeding operations.

Four additional public hearings will be held on the proposed rule for concentrated animal feeding operations:

- November 2, at 9:00 a.m., at the Cass County Community Center, 805 W. 10th Street in Atlantic
- November 4, at 6:30 p.m., at Marr Park, 2943 Hwy 92 in Ainsworth
- November 5, at 8:30 a.m., at the Parks & Recreation, 200 First Street NE, in Waverly
- November 5, at 1:30 p.m., at the Wallace Building, 5th Floor Conference Rooms, 502 E. 9th Street in Des Moines

A complete copy of the rule proposal can be found under animal feeding operations on the DNR Web site at www.iowadnr.com or at <http://www.iowadnr.com/epc/04sep/5.pdf>.

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing during the public hearings. All other comments must be received no later than Nov. 5, 2004.

Anyone who plans to attend a public hearing and has special requirements, such as those related to hearing or mobility, should contact Gene Tinker at (515) 281-3103.

Direct written comments on the proposed rules to Gene Tinker at the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 502 East Ninth Street, Fax (515) 281-8895, or by email to gene.tinker@dnr.state.ia.us.

For more information, contact Gene Tinker at (515) 281-3103.

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DNR IMPROVES WASTEWATER PERMITTING PROCESS

DES MOINES – The DNR will reduce processing time to issue wastewater permits from more than a year to approximately 15 days, after completely revamping its process in September.

“What we used to do mid-way through the process, we are now doing up front to make the process more efficient,” said Angela Chen, supervisor of the DNR’s wastewater operation permit section.

This is good news for the 1,460 municipalities and industries that are required to renew their national pollutant discharge elimination system (NPDES) permits every five years. It also means that they will be receiving notice of permit renewals up to four months earlier.

Some of the process improvements will make a large difference to the applicants, Chen added. Those include:

- Prioritizing the list of renewals
- Assigning renewals to one permit writer so that applicants have one person who can answer their questions
- Resolving compliance issues before applicants apply for a permit
- Informing permit applicants of changes in state water quality standards that affect their operation

“Making these changes will improve communication with our stakeholders, reduce steps in the process by more than 60 percent and allow us to issue permits before they expire,” said Chen.

Chen is also expecting to eliminate a backlog of permit applications as the new process is used.

The DNR made the improvements during a weeklong effort that involved representatives from industry, municipalities, private consultants, environmental groups, and DNR permitting and field office staff.

With an eye on the environmental consequences, Susan Heathcote of the Iowa Environmental Council said that one of her biggest concerns coming into the kaizen event was that the product be improved, not just the process. Making public information available and getting public input early on in the process will help accomplish that goal.

Participants used a Japanese process called kaizen, or continual improvement, a process used by industries to increase production. This was the fifth kaizen event held at the DNR since June of 2003.

Kaizen participants identified the current steps in the NPDES permitting process, including the delays, hand-offs, decisions and black holes. Then they developed a new process and new forms, checklists and a communications plan which will standardize the process and make it easier for applicants and DNR employees alike.

For more information, contact Angela Chen at (515) 281-4736.